FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
15-105B	ORLEANS		EAS.688

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*: Eastham Center

Address: 2050 State Highway

Historic Name: Walter M. & Edith W. Higgins House

Uses: Present: two-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1926

Source: deeds, tax records

Style/Form: Craftsman

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: cobblestone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: garage

Major Alterations *(with dates):* large addition for 2nd dwelling unit off southeast corner (1987)

Condition: good

Moved: **no** ☒ **yes** ☐ **Date:**

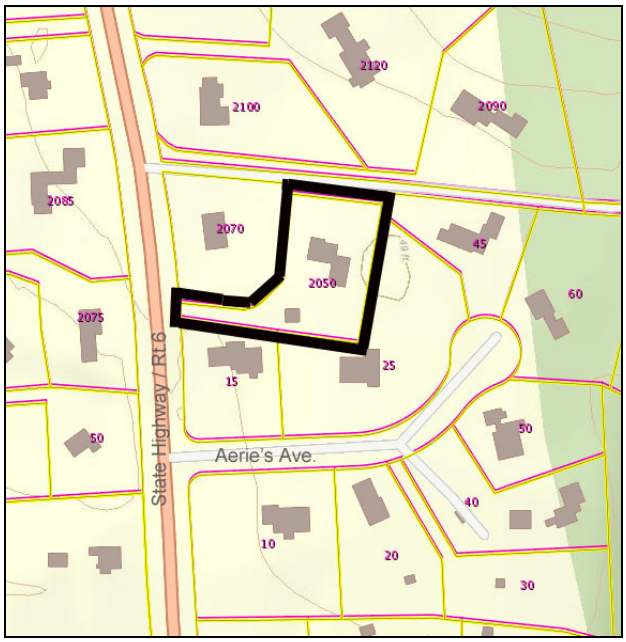
Acreage: 0.55 acre

Setting: The subject property is a flag lot located on the east side of State Highway/Rt. 6. It is surrounded by single family residential properties, though a cabin colony (Cottage Grove) is located just a little to the southwest across the highway.

Photograph

View from west.

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2013

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This one-story, wood frame dwelling has a front gable roof with shed-roof dormers on both the south and north sides. It has two lean-tos on its north side. In 1987 a large addition was constructed off the southeast corner of the original house.[1] That addition also has a shed-roofed dormer, only on the north side. The original house is oriented to the west with a full front porch (enclosed, date unknown). A deck was constructed in front of the porch and in 2011 an addition for a new mudroom projecting from the west side of the porch over this deck required that a new shed roof be constructed.[2] That same year solar panels were added to the south-facing roof of the addition.[3] A large exterior stone side wall chimney is on the right (south) side of the original section while a second exterior stone chimney is on the rear (east) wall of the addition. The addition also has a lean-to off its north facade. A walkway/deck wraps from the south to the east side of the addition. The entire building is clad with wood shingles, and asphalt shingles sheath the roofs.

A c. 1931 two-car detached garage with gable roof is sited forward and to the right (southeast) of the house. It is clad with wood shingles like the house. An unimproved driveway off State Highway runs through the narrow "stem" part of the flag lot, between the garage and the house and curves around to a parking pad behind (east of) the house. A variety of mature coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs are on the property.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 2050 State Highway was built in 1926 by Walter M. Higgins an accountant with the Somerville Telephone Company. In January of that year Higgins bought a two-acre parcel from Eastham native Emma L. Dill Johnson Sherman, the daughter of Freeman and Elizabeth Dill; she was born Lizzie Emma Dill in 1860. In 1881 she married Alden B. Johnson, a Maine native who was then working as a nurse, probably at Danvers State Hospital (founded in 1878 as the State Lunatic Hospital). By the late 1890s Johnson was one of three "transportation officers" for the State Board of Insanity. He died in Boston in 1904 of typhoid, a disease he may have contracted at the state hospital, which had experienced a "serious outbreak" of the disease in 1900. In 1913 Emma Dill Johnson married Albert F. Sherman who, like Alden Johnson, had come from Liberty, Maine. Sherman had been an attendant at Danvers State Hospital in 1880 and in 1899 he was appointed superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallop's Island in Boston Harbor. His previous wife Evelyn Whitman Sherman had been appointed matron at the same time. After Evelyn Sherman's death in 1911, Emma Dill Johnson was named matron of the quarantine station. She and Albert Sherman resigned their Gallop's Island positions on the same day in June 1912, and they were married the following April in Boston.[4] The 1920 and 1930 censuses show the Shermans as Orleans residents.

In 1914 Emma Sherman bought four acres, with a dwelling house and outbuildings, from the estate of poultry farmer Sparrow Snow for $800.[5] Born in Eastham in 1831, Sparrow Snow was one of the sons of Samuel and Phebe Snow, who had owned land and buildings on the east side of State Highway since at least the 1850s. The 1900 census lists Sparrow Snow as a farmer in a household with his wife Mary and brother Thomas, born in 1839; they were probably living in the Samuel Snow homestead. Tax records for 1902, however, show Sparrow Snow in a house valued at $100 and a barn at $50; "old homestead" is crossed out in his tax listing, suggesting that that house had been razed. Sparrow Snow died in November 1912 and the administrator of his estate sold part of his real estate to Emma L. Sherman. In January, 1926, she sold the southern half of this parcel to Walter M. Higgins of Somerville.[6]

Walter M. Higgins was born in 1879 in Lowell, the son of railroad engineer James D. Higgins and his wife Catherine; both were Vermont natives. Whether they were related to the Higginses of Eastham is not yet known, though it seems likely. His father died in 1906, and in 1910 and 1920 Walter Higgins lived with his widowed mother and a nephew in Somerville. Between 1920 and 1924 he married, and by 1930 he was living most of the year in Holbrook with his wife Edith and their son Allen, born about 1927.

In October 1936 Higgins sold his two-acre parcel to Robert Stitt Sparrow of Brooklyn, who had acquired the other two acres of Sherman's four-acre tract from her in March of the same year.[7] Sparrow was an Eastham native, born in 1891 to Wilbur Norris

[1] Town of Eastham records, building permit dated April 13, 1987.
[2] Ibid., building permit dated Sept. 14, 2011 based on plans submitted Sept. 12, 2011; plans do not specify whether the porch was being enclosed at that time, though the plan view labels the area "deck" with "new mudroom."
[3] Ibid., building permit dated Nov. 29, 2011.
[4] *Second Annual Report of the State Board of Insanity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the Year Ending September 30, 1900* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1901), 72-73; *Forty-first Annual Report of the Health Department of the City of Boston for the Year 1912* (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1913), 56.
[5] James B. Steele, administrator estate Sparrow Snow, to Emma L. Sherman, 24 February 1914, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (hereafter cited as BCD) 326:425.
[6] Emma L. Sherman, Orleans, to Walter M. Higgins, Somerville, 25 January 1926, BCD 431:424.
[7] Walter M. Higgins, Holbrook, to Robert S. Sparrow, Brooklyn NY, 7 October 1936, BCD 521:248; Emma L. Sherman, Orleans, to Robert S. Sparrow, New York NY, 24 March 1936, BCD 514:470.

and Sophia R. Weller Sparrow the sixth of the seven children.[8] In the mid-1910s Sparrow attended the Massachusetts Nautical School (now Massachusetts Maritime Academy), from which he graduated in 1919. He served as master on several oceangoing vessels in the late 1910s and 1920s, and by 1923 he had become agent for the steamship company A. H. Burll and Company in New York City. Sparrow lived most of the year in Brooklyn.

Tax records for 1937 show Robert S. Sparrow with a house valued at $1500, a garage valued at $120, and 4.5 acres in his homestead lot; he owned another six acres in two other tracts. In September, 1947, he subdivided the property and sold a 1.25-acre parcel in the northwest corner to Albert and Constance E. Kohr of Melrose. The Kohrs are shown in 1948 Eastham tax records as owning 1.25 acres, being part of lot 70 in block 6 on assessors' maps, with a cottage worth $2500 and a garage worth $300. After Constance Kohr died in April 1948, Albert Kohr sold the 2050 State Highway to Luther and Eva G. Brown of Malden. Luther Brown was born in Holmfirth, England, in 1883. He came to the United States in 1909 and was working as a machinist in Brockton by 1910. In 1914 he married Eva Georgianna Goodwin, who had emigrated from England in 1905. By 1920 the couple was living in Providence, Rhode Island, where Luther Brown was a cotton mill mechanic. They were living in Malden by 1940. The Browns owned the 2050 State Highway until 1962, when Eva Brown sold the property to Gordon F. Urann of Quincy; he in turn sold it to Beryl Joan Oxley of Toronto in 1973. Oxley sold the property to John and Charlotte R. McCully of East Orleans in 1985, who in 1986 subdivided the tract into two lots—2050 and 2070 State Highway. The McCullys placed the property in trust in 2002 and the next year sold 2050 State Highway to its current owners, Brent L. and Joann D. Carlson of McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania.[9]

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MAPS
Walling, Henry F. *Map of the Counties of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Massachusetts Based upon the Trigonometrical Survey of the State*. New York: D. R. Smith and Co.,1858.
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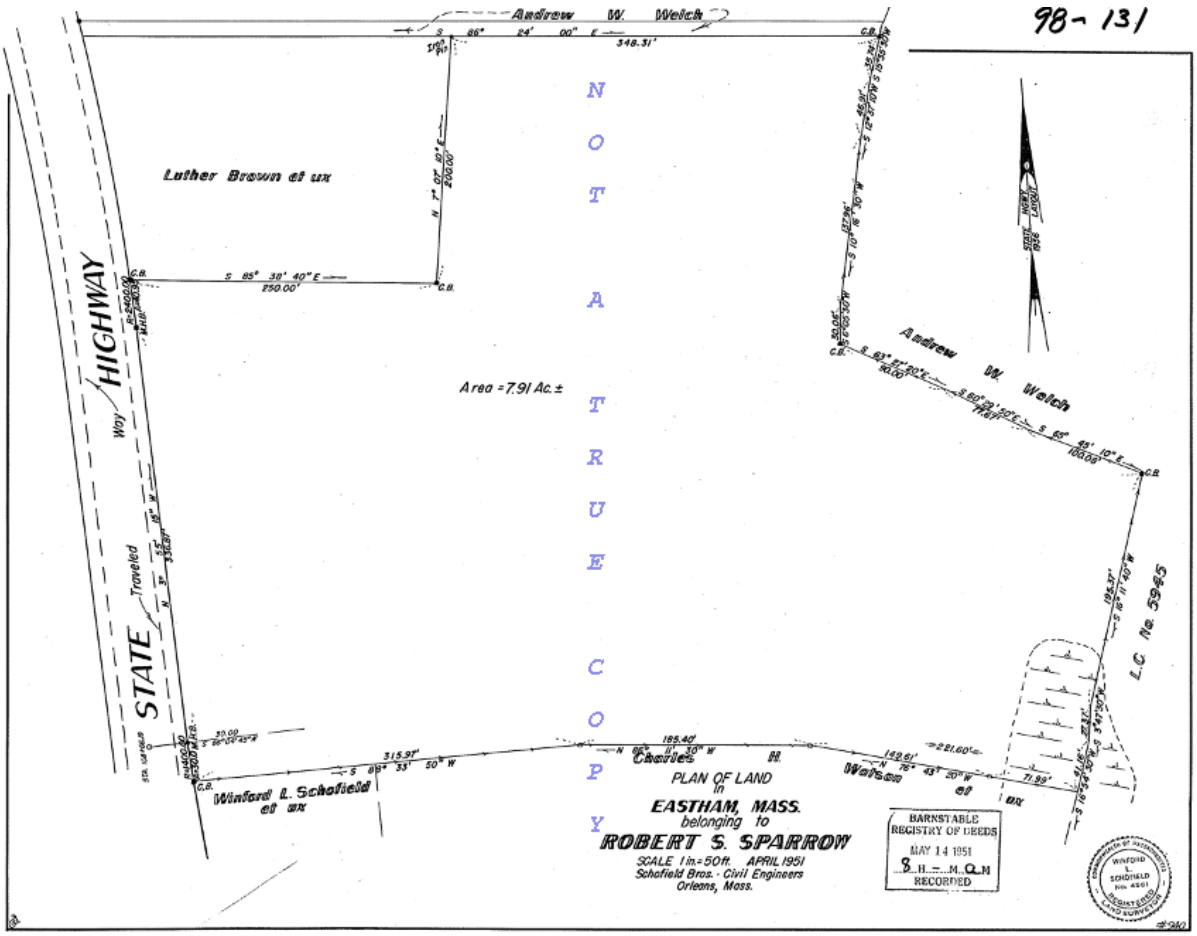
Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts . . . from Official Plans and Actual Surveys. Boston: Walker Lithograph and Publishing Co., 1905, 1910.

[8] Wilbur N. Sparrow, the son of Daniel and Elvira Hatch Sparrow, lost his hearing at the age of five after an attack of scarlet fever, and when he was twelve he was sent to the Hartford School for the Deaf in Connecticut. He remained there seven years and then entered the preparatory department of Gallaudet College (then the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb) in Washington, DC, in 1872. He graduated from Gallaudet in 1877 and the next year was hired as an instructor in the Columbia Institution's primary department, Kendall School. He taught there two years and then returned to occupy his father's homestead in Eastham. In 1880 he married Sophia R. Weller, a Maryland native who was one of his students at the Kendall School. The couple had seven children, and Wilbur Sparrow died in Eastham in 1898. "Twenty-third Annual Report of the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb," in *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior on the Operations of the Department for the Year Ended June 30, 1880* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 2: 501-2; Melville Ballard, "Wilbur Norris Sparrow," in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 336-37.

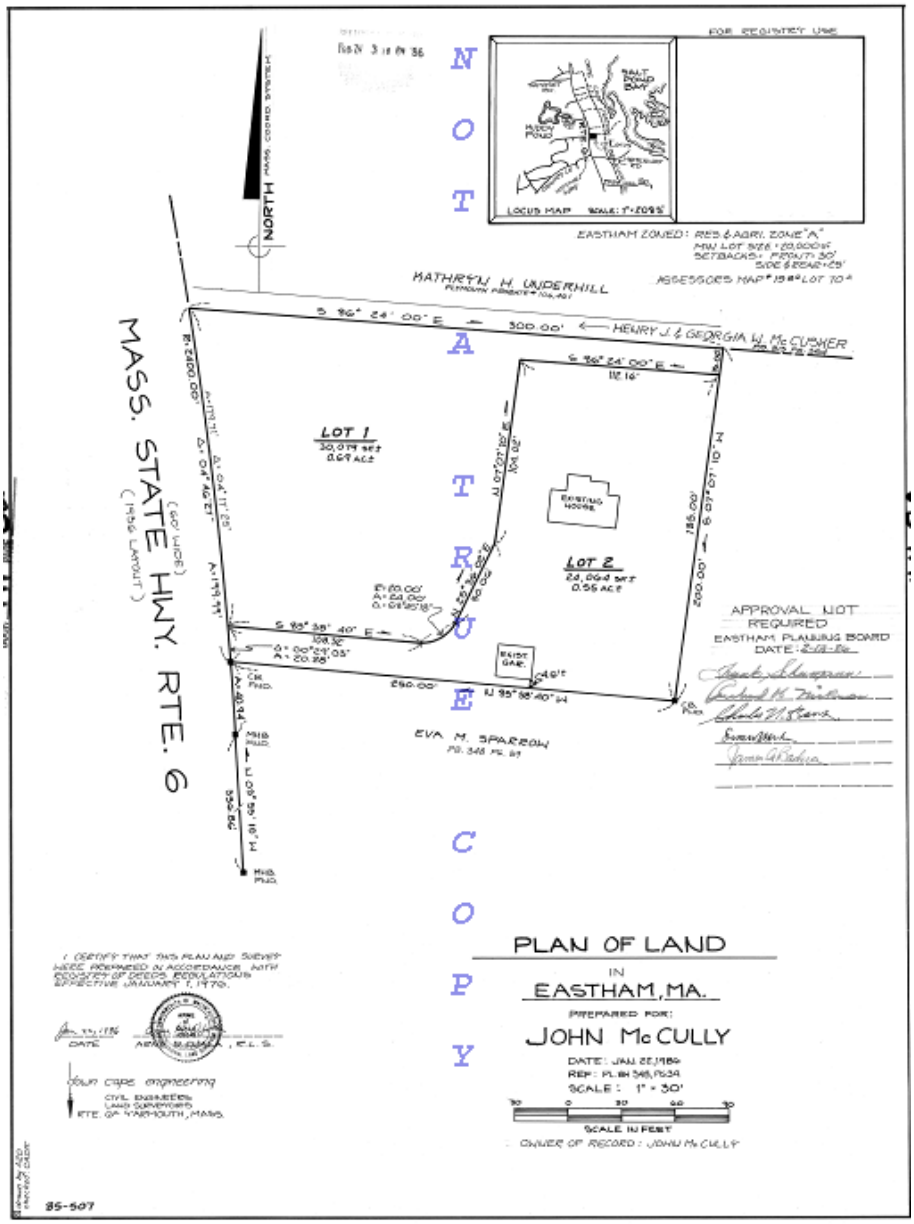
[9] Robert S. Sparrow to Albert and Constance E. Kohr, 9 September 1974, BCDS 677:411; Albert Kohr to Luther and Eva G. Brown, 28 July 1949, BCD 727:460; Eva G. Brown to Gordon F. Urann, 16 April 1962, BCD 1153:375; Urann to Beryl Joan Oxley, 28 September 1973, BCD 1944:181; Oxley to John and Charlotte R. McCully, 26 June 1985, BCD 4604:34; John and Charlotte R. McCully to John and Charlotte R. McCully, trustees McCully Nominee Trust, 23 October 2002, BCD 15805:57; Charlotte R. McCully, trustee McCully Nominee Trust, to Brent L. and Joann D. Carlson, 7 March 2003, BCD 16525:227. See also "Plan of Land in Eastham, Ma. Prepared for John McCully," 22 January 1986, Bristol County Registry of Deeds Plan (hereafter cited as BCP) 411:82.

Continuation sheet 2

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Robert Stitt Sparrow subdivided his property in 1951 (BCP 98:131); the parcel marked "Luther Brown et ux contains what is now the two lots at 2050 and 2070 State Highway.



The McCully subdivision of 1986 (BCP 411:82); 2050 State Highway is Lot 2.

PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)

View from southwest (photo by Town of Eastham Assessor).

Aerial view from west (photo courtesy of Bing Maps online).

Continuation sheet 4

View of addition from southwest.